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## ABSTRACT

The 12 brief articles in this "feature" or theme issue describe successful approaches to development of outdoor education programs which successfully integrate individuals with and without disabilities. Titles and authors are: "Outdoor Education and Adventure: Challenges and Rewards for All" (Stuart J. Schleien); "Benefits of Integrated Outdoor Education and Adventure" (Leo McAvoy); "Participant Comments from Integrated Outdoor Adventures" (Molly Schlaefer and Greg Stark); "Integrated Camping: After Two Solid Weeks of It..." (John E. Rynders and Stuart Schleien); "Camp Integration: Overcoming Barriers" (Gary M. Robb); "Screening Participants for Outdoor Programs" (Greg Lais); "How to Integrate Successfully: Promoting Positive Interactions" (John Rynders and Stuart Schleien); "'If I Can Do This...': The Ski for Light Experience" (Tip Ray); "A Place for Healing: Vinland National Center" (Susan Rivard); "Making Friends with Peers and the Earth" (Linda Heyne and Micky Pearson); "Accessing Our National Parks" (W. Kay Ellis); "Administrative Issues in Integrated Outdoor Programs" (Leo McAvoy). Also included are lists of 35 suggested resources and 13 suggested readings. (DB)

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# IMPACT

INSTITUTE ON  
COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Feature Issue on Integrated Outdoor Education/Adventure

Volume 4 (4) Winter, 1991-92

## Outdoor Education and Adventure: Challenges and Rewards for All

by Stuart J. Schleien

Happiness depends on one's leisure. Aristotle wrote in his *Ethics*, "because we occupy ourselves so that we may have leisure, just as we make war in order that we may live at peace." British novelist G.K. Chesterton believed that "leisure was the opportunity for personal and idiosyncratic pursuits, and not for ordered recreation. Above all, free time was to remain free of the encumbrance of convention, free of the need for busyness." In a similar vein, yet relating specifically to outdoor education, William Woodsworth, a teacher, scholar, and lover of everything natural, stated, "Come forth into the light of things. Let nature be your teacher." And the noted naturalist and conservationist, John Muir, stated the rationale for outdoor education when he said, "I live only to entice people to look at nature's loveliness."

If one should take the poetic words of these scholars to heart, it becomes clear that there is something very important about studying the composition of a snowflake, observing the behaviors of the inhabitants of a pond, or learning how to cross-country ski in a wilderness area. These three activities are but a sampling of outdoor education and adventure options that are available to children in elementary schools, teens exploring their neighborhoods, and to adults seeking new, rewarding leisure skills. Planning for creative and enjoyable use of one's discretionary time is a great challenge for people without disabilities. Appropriate use of free time is an even greater challenge for people with developmental disabilities and, consequently, these kinds of



Photo courtesy of the National Park Service

Increasing numbers of persons with disabilities are enjoying outdoor experiences as a result of a growing commitment to accessibility and integration by outdoor education and adventure organizations.

*Integration, continued on page 19*

### From the Editors:

*Quality integrated outdoor programming is occurring throughout the country, and it can happen where you live and work. That is the theme of this issue of IMPACT. The articles in these pages describe successful approaches to outdoor education and high adventure in which persons with and without disabilities share the rewards of experiencing nature and of meeting challenges with a group of supportive peers. This issue discusses the benefits of integrated outdoor programs -- benefits for all participants -- from both empirical and personal perspectives. It identifies steps to be taken by program managers in developing and maintaining quality integrated options. And it profiles programs that are today bringing new opportunities for healing, growth, and excitement to people with a wide range of abilities. We hope that this issue will contribute to a new vision, an inclusive vision, for outdoor programming of all types.*

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## Benefits of Integrated Outdoor Education and Adventure

by Leo McAvoy

No one would dispute the statement that people benefit from exposure to nature - being out-of-doors - whether it is a city park, the seashore, mountains, or a primitive area. Just being there, breathing the air, is exhilarating. But, outdoor education and adventure are more than that. They not only teach people how to enjoy the natural environment, they also enlarge lives cognitively and affectively. And, *integrated* outdoor education and adventure programs have the potential for even more benefits on a personal and social level.

Over the past four years, researchers at the University of Minnesota have conducted six demonstration/research projects in outdoor education facilities and one in an outdoor adventure program in an attempt to identify some of the benefits of these types of integrated programs. The outdoor education facilities were managed by a county parks system, a municipality, a private foundation, and a school district. An integrated outdoor education program was developed in each location ranging in length and format from 90 minutes once a week for nine weeks, to two hours a week for six weeks, to a more intensive 20 hours a week for two weeks. Program titles included, *Winter Ecology and Snowshoeing*, *Prairie Life and Restoration*, *Habitat Changes in Spring*, *Journeys: How Plants and Animals Travel*, and *The Food Chain*. Participants ranged in age from 8-15 years and were recruited through the outdoor education agency, local schools, and local youth groups. All program groups consisted of children with and without disabilities and the typical program size was two to four persons with disabilities teamed with eight peers without disabilities. The disabilities represented included cerebral palsy, spina bifida, hearing impairments, Down syndrome, autism, mental retardation, and severe developmental disabilities. Research methods included behavioral observation of social interactions, peer acceptance surveys, a cognitive pre- and post-test, task analytic assessments of physical skill acquisition, and staff interviews.

A general finding of these research projects was that integrated outdoor education programs are feasible and are effective in gaining the interest and enthusiasm of persons with and without disabilities. Levels of social interaction between children with and without disabilities increased in all of the programs studied. The levels of socially appropriate and inappropriate behavior tended to vary from one activity to the other and from one day to the other, but some decreases in socially inappropriate behavior were documented. There was a positive change in the attitudes of the children without disabilities toward the children with disabilities, indicating an increased understanding and tolerance of the capabilities and needs of persons with disabilities. The task analytic assessment process indicated that persons with disabilities (in this case Down syndrome) can successfully

acquire leisure outdoor skills like snowshoeing. The cognitive pre- and post-testing of 279 second and third graders in one program indicated that children had significant gains in knowledge about the environment in both integrated and segregated groups. There were no significant differences in knowledge gained when nonintegrated groups (containing no children with disabilities) were compared to integrated groups, challenging the notion that integration drags down the cognitive achievement level of the nondisabled children.

High adventure integrated wilderness programs also provide beneficial experiences for participants. A recent study conducted by the same University of Minnesota researchers has documented that integrated high adventure programs can result in positive attitude and lifestyle changes for participants. This study consisted of interviews with 40 participants of integrated adventure trips sponsored by Wilderness Inquiry, a Minneapolis-based integrated outdoor adventure organization. Adults with and without disabilities participated in 7-12 day wilderness canoe trips in northern Minnesota and Ontario, and were interviewed after their trips. The positive changes reported in this study include attitudes toward persons of varying abilities, interpersonal relationships, confidence levels, willingness to take risks, feelings about self, goal-setting abilities, leisure skills, tolerance of stress, and, in 36% of the participants with disabilities, increased ability to live independently.

Although these findings provide documentation for some of the benefits of integrated programming, recreation specialists, outdoor education leaders, and other personnel should keep in mind that the main reasons persons with disabilities participate in outdoor education and adventure programs are the same as the reasons nondisabled persons participate: they desire feelings of self-accomplishment, a connection to the natural world, friendships, opportunities to improve leisure outdoor skills and overcome natural obstacles, and a chance to test their own limits.

Approximately 43 million Americans have some form of disability. Some of those individuals are served by segregated outdoor programs that exist for special education classes or groups with mental retardation who are from residential homes; some also have access to one-time programs for a select group with a particular disability. Integrated outdoor education and adventure programs, on the other hand, offer ongoing opportunities for everyone to become aware of and appreciate the natural and cultural resources that outdoor education and recreation facilities have to offer all.

*Leo McAvoy is a Professor in the School of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies, University of Minnesota.*

## Participant Comments from Integrated Outdoor Adventures

by Molly Schlaefter and Greg Stark

Integrated outdoor adventures recently have been the focus of many academic research studies that attempt to ascertain the benefits of these adventures for participants. Often however, we fail to get direct feedback from the participants - what they are thinking and feeling as a result of their integrated experience. The following is a compilation of quotes from five participants in integrated canoe trips to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area led by Wilderness Inquiry, a Minneapolis-based integrated outdoor adventure program. These trips were opportunities for the five - Terry, Karen, Brad, Susan, and Jane - to acquire new perspectives about themselves, relationships with others, and their approaches to life.

For Terry, whose mobility is impaired from rheumatoid arthritis, and Karen, a nondisabled participant, the feeling of acceptance by the group stood out in their memories of the canoe trip:

*"I felt so at ease... I could have told anyone anything... It was the first time I've talked about my disability comfortably. And told everything not leaving out one little part..."*

*"It's so neat. It's OK to be weird, and crazy here, and feel uninhibited. I felt so accepted."*

After a particularly hard day on the trail, Terry had been anxious about holding the group up because she had to rest often. She tried to keep her thoughts to herself and hurry along the portages.

*"Then one evening people talked about their handicaps... It was hard for me because I don't usually talk about it. They created an atmosphere where I felt really at ease. Somebody felt like they weren't doing as much work. I said I felt like I shouldn't be taking so many rests. They said I was contributing a lot and it didn't matter the amount. The nonhandicapped people said they get tired too. At first I thought they were just saying that, but they were so sincere."*

Susan, who has cerebral palsy, had similar experiences:

*"I really like to let out my feelings. It's important to me. I guess after a couple of days of not talking I realized I had things to say and said it. Once I knew people better I felt more comfortable. I guess because we worked together... I felt there was no danger in opening up. Also no danger to me from the trip itself. I felt more relaxed."*

The benefits of the integrated adventure also included positive changes in attitudes toward others. For instance, Brad, a nondisabled participant, found the trip to be a time

for reexamination of his attitudes:

*"I'd been on trips before with a group of guys but never gals and that was very interesting... Also, I learned to rely on people I hadn't considered capable, people I'd seen as objects."*

Karen's only previous experience with people with disabilities was in a helping role as a volunteer. She too experienced a different attitude through the trip:

*"It was an obvious difference in attitudes with WI. There, the people are participants. They're there to help me as much as I help them."*

Many participants also developed greater self-confidence as a result of meeting the challenges of the wilderness adventures, confidence that impacted their daily lives as they returned home. This benefit was reflected in the following comments by Susan and Terry:

*"The portages helped me see that if I really want to do something I can. It helped me appreciate trying. It gave me a good feeling and still does; when I get something I want it because I fought or struggled for it."*

*"I went on an interview a while back. I took it upon myself to look in the paper and go down myself. I didn't ask my vocational counselor. I tried because I wanted to get something on my own."*

Jane, who has a spinal cord injury, also reports a "can do" feeling was an important lasting effect of the trip for her:

*"The biggest thing was the challenge we all met. I had this strong feeling. Well, I made it through this, I wonder what I'm going to do next. It was a prophecy almost..."*

Since the trip, Jane has begun taking driver's training, which she thought she would never do because she was injured in an auto accident. Her experience on the trip played a big part in that decision:

*"I'm not going to say 'If it wasn't for WI, I wouldn't be here today.' But I know it had a lot to do with it. It made it happen faster. The challenge really gave me strength and confidence. It made me realize that I can make it through that, something that a lot of able-bodied people won't try; it made me feel less of a cripple."*

*Edited by Molly Schlaefter, Integration Specialist, Wilderness Inquiry, from a study by Greg Stark, titled, Wilderness Inquiry: Six Perspectives on a Common Experience (1991), published with support from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education.*

## Integrated Camping: After Two Solid Weeks of It...

by John E. Rynders and Stuart J. Schleien

Virtually nothing is known about the feasibility of integrating children with and without disabilities for an intensified, integrated camping experience. Can children with severe disabilities and children without disabilities get along together in a 2-week round-the-clock camping "immersion?" What about the effect of integrated programming on the attitudes of camp staff members? Recently, we set out to

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**Virtually nothing is known about the feasibility of integrating learners with and without disabilities for an intensified, integrated camping experience.**

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answer these questions through a study at Wilder Forest (Rynders, Schleien, & Mustonen, 1990).

Wilder Forest is a 980-acre outdoor education environment serving a variety of human service agencies from the Twin Cities and the upper Midwest. Facilities include camp grounds, handicapped-accessible earth-sheltered lodges, a dining hall, 70-acre farm, greenhouse, orchard, and a swimming beach.

Three campers with disabilities participated in the study. Molly (real names not used), was a 9-year-old girl diagnosed as having autism. She did not actively seek interactions with adults, except to occasionally sign for assistance. She also tended to ignore peers. Mary, an 11-year-old girl, had severe mental retardation and a profound bilateral hearing loss. She did not actively seek interactions with peers or adults. John, a 9-year-old boy, had severe mental retardation. Although nonverbal, he had a modest sign language repertoire. John tended to seek out adults for interactions more than peers.

Campers without disabilities, 3 boys and 5 girls, ranged in age from 10 to 13 years and attended public or parochial schools throughout the Twin Cities area. Most of them had little or no previous direct exposure to individuals with severe disabilities. All campers, those with disabilities and those without, were volunteers.

Training revolved around preparing nondisabled participants to interact cooperatively with their peers who had disabilities. For example, they were instructed to begin an activity by offering their companions simple verbal instruction, then, if necessary, to demonstrate the skill needed. If that did not suffice, they were encouraged to help their companions with gentle hand-over-hand guidance. Throughout the training, they were asked to offer participatory assistance but not to force it. Their role as friends, rather than teachers, was emphasized repeatedly.

A typical day commenced with small integrated teams of campers using the wood stove to prepare breakfast together. Following the morning meal and cleanup, they participated in an integrated craft activity such as wood-working, wool combing, or candlemaking. At noon, campers ate lunch together and then moved, in their small teams, to one or more afternoon activities such as integrated hiking, boating, fishing, and swimming. Late in the afternoon, groups took turns preparing dinner and doing



**Campers with a wide range of abilities successfully worked together on various activities, such as candlemaking.**

chores at the farm. Evening activities included integrated games, hayrides, folk dancing, and campfire programs.

Results of the study showed that participants with severe disabilities displayed a substantial increase in the number of steps performed independently in the activities of table clearing and swimming preparation. There was also an overall increase in social interaction attempts directed by nondisabled campers toward campers with disabilities.

Each evening, nondisabled campers participated in an informal "debriefing" session without campers with disabilities being present. At the beginning of each of these sessions, every nondisabled camper received a 5-item questionnaire and was asked to complete it independently by circling numbers on it that corresponded to his or her perceptions of the integration experience. Statistically

significant positive differences occurred in their feelings of friendship toward their peers with disabilities and in their own self-confidence.

Regarding camp staff perceptions, staff members received questionnaires before and after the program to solicit their feelings about the integration experience. Overall, staff displayed more positive attitudes toward the integration of the residential camp following intervention, with two of the items showing statistically significant pre-post differences (preference for integration over segregation, and desire for more integrated programming).

### **Taken together, findings...indicated that a relatively long-term integration experience is not only feasible, but also beneficial.**

Taken together, these three findings - increased social interaction bids and differences in perceptions of friendship by campers without disabilities, increased skill acquisition in campers with severe disabilities, and the positive ratings of staff members concerning the experience - indicate that a relatively long-term integration experience is not only feasible, but also beneficial. However, providing a relatively intensive integrated program is not free from practical challenges. For example, participants without disabilities were, at times, perplexed by the inability of their peers with disabilities to socialize with them in ways to which they were accustomed. And, staff members, while valuing the integrated program and wanting to conduct other programs in an integrated manner in the future, commented that integrated programs are more difficult to implement than self-contained programs. We believe that these staff perceptions and nondisabled participant concerns are realistic and valid. As staff and campers gain more experience with integrated programming, it will likely become easier for them to participate successfully. For the future (as well as in the present) extremely careful planning will be required to have integrated relationships prosper on a long-term basis.

Relationships that were fostered at Wilder Forest were of benefit to children without disabilities as well as to those with disabilities. Indeed, mutuality of benefit should be our long-term integration goal as a society. A quotation from an article in *Scouting* magazine illustrates the mutually beneficial experiences and lessons that are available in a good integrated program, such as *Scouting Together*. This program brings troops of boys with and without disabilities together for a one-weekend camporee (an aggregated camping experience). As the article's author, wrote:

*Many of the special scouts needed 3 minutes and lots of helping hands to traverse the monkey bridge which able-bodied boys cross in 10 or 15 seconds . . . But there was never a shortage of willing hands to help, and there was*

*no dearth of cheers and cries of "nice job!" from their buddies and instructors.*

*It is hard to say whether the special scouts or their buddies had more fun or learned more. For the nonhandicapped scouts, especially those who had never before had close contact with disabled people, it was an intense experience . . . "What most of our boys seem to get out of it is a much greater understanding of handicapped people in general," said [an] Assistant Scoutmaster (p. 31).*

Willing hands, fun, learning, understanding. All of these valuable outcomes are available to people of all ability levels in a well-run integrated camping program.

*John E. Rynders is a Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Minnesota. Stuart J. Schleen is an Associate Professor in the School of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies with an Adjunct Appointment in Special Education Programs, University of Minnesota.*

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**Fishing was one of the group activities shared by campers with and without disabilities during the two-week long residential camping experience.**

## Camp Integration: Overcoming Barriers

by Gary M. Robb

The integration of persons with disabilities into organized residential camping programs has been an area that has received a great deal of lip service in recent years. Unfortunately, the amount of talk regarding this issue has far outdistanced the availability of integrated camping programs. While there have been "levels" of integration evident in some camps across the country, there are still few camps today that offer truly integrated programs.

### Defining the Problem

There are several unresolved issues retarding the growth of integrated organized camping programs, including:

- A continuation of overprotective attitudes by parents, teachers, and advocates that translates into a lack of effort or pressure to get camps to integrate their programs.
- Sponsoring agencies (or camps serving people with disabilities) that are reluctant to "let go" of their specialized camps since in many cases that is their reason for being, and funding is received specifically to provide services for persons with disabilities.
- Operators of specialized camps who rationalize the continuation of segregated programs on the basis of disability-specific educational and rehabilitative programming. They also argue that the segregated camp setting offers a respite from competing in the world with those of greater abilities.
- Architectural barriers present at most camps that eliminate full integration and participation in programs by persons with mobility impairments. Many residential camps in this country were constructed between the 1930s and the 1950s, often on property topographically unsuitable for accessible design and construction of facilities and recreation areas.

Probably the major factor in the lack of integrated camps in this country, however, is the perpetuation of negative and/or stereotypical attitudes toward persons with disabilities by the general public, including camp operators. Whether we like it or not, it is a fact that most of our society still views persons with disabilities as helpless, pitiful creatures that require specialized programs, staff, and facilities. The attitude persists that "it's okay for them to go to camp, as long as it is not mine!"

### Recent Trends in Camp Integration

Over the past 10 to 15 years there have been attempts to integrate persons with disabilities into camping programs. These attempts have mostly been characterized by:

- "Integrating" campers with differing levels of disability,

such as those with physical, learning, and cognitive disabilities.

- Accepting persons with disabilities into a "special camp session" alongside campers without disabilities. While these programs may be going on in the same location and at the same time, actual contact between the "special camp" and the "regular" camp are often minimal.
- Creating buddy or sibling programs in which the camper with a disability is paired with a nondisabled person.
- Family camping programs where persons with disabilities are present.
- Integrating persons with borderline (in many cases almost unnoticeable) disabilities into existing camp programs, such as persons with learning problems or mild mobility impairments.

There is a paucity of literature that would indicate that full integration of persons with disabilities is taking place to any significant degree.

### The Laws: A Hope for the Future

There is still hope that we will see more and more fully integrated camping programs in the future. While it is slow, most of the problems cited above are changing. These changes have been and will continue to be stimulated by laws that have been enacted to provide opportunities for full participation in society by persons with disabilities. The most significant legislative mandates that are providing the backdrop for change include the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968; The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, amended in 1990; the Individuals with Disabilities Act; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and subsequent amendments; and most recently, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This new law, the ADA as it is called, will no doubt have the most significant ramification on the integration of persons with disabilities into the mainstream of American society, including organized camping programs. Title III of the ADA is concerned with making public accommodations and commercial facilities accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities, and is targeted at both the public and private sector. This law not only provides the framework for encouraging all public and private camps to include campers with disabilities, but has already given a tremendous psychological lift to the disabled community and to advocacy groups that focus on the rights of persons with disabilities. While the intent of the law is to encourage voluntary compliance, there are statutory penalties for noncompliance, including punitive damage relief.

## Conclusion

Integrated organized camping programs in the USA have a long way to go. For people with all levels of ability to fully participate in the program of their choice, major structural, philosophical, and attitudinal changes remain to be made. One can only hope that as we as a society mature in our approach to human rights and equal opportunity,

more and more camping programs will follow suit in providing fully integrative and participatory camping opportunities for persons with disabilities.

*Gary M. Robb is the Director of Bradford Woods Outdoor Education Center in Martinsville, Indiana, and Associate Professor in the Department of Recreation and Park Administration, Indiana University, Bloomington.*

## Overcoming Other Barriers ...



### President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

9 December 1991

To Whom It May Concern:

We have made great strides in recognizing the value and potential of people with disabilities. The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 is in keeping with our tradition of equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, creed, or physical or mental disability.

The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities recognizes the value of integrated outdoor adventures for all Americans.

For many people with disabilities, a significant hurdle to employment is simply having the confidence of knowing that they can apply themselves and make a difference. Persons with disabilities who participate in challenging outdoor adventures develop new confidence in overcoming the everyday challenges of transportation, access, and employment.

As a long time advocate of first rate recreational programs for people with disabilities, I encourage you to support the concept of integrated outdoor adventure in your programs and activities.

Sincerely,

Justin Dart  
Chairman

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Photo courtesy of Wilderness Inquiry

Participants on a 9-day canoe trip in the Superior Provincial Park of northwestern Ontario.

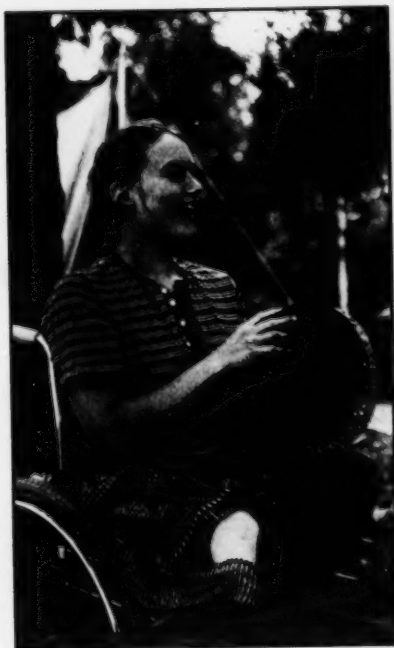


Photo courtesy of Wilderness Inquiry

A participant on a northern Minnesota canoe trip relaxes in camp.



Photo courtesy of Wilderness Inquiry

Children canoe the Mississippi River in a collaborative program between their school and an integrated outdoor adventure organization.



Adults with disabilities in a community integration program practice social and leisure skills at a local ice rink.



Students at an outdoor education center experience nature in a variety of ways.



Photo courtesy of Ski for Light

A skier with a visual impairment and a sighted guide share the cross-country ski trails of Colorado.



Students discover a bird's nest in an integrated nature study program.



Photo courtesy of Wilderness Inquiry

An integrated high adventure program offers participants with varying ability levels the opportunity to meet challenges.

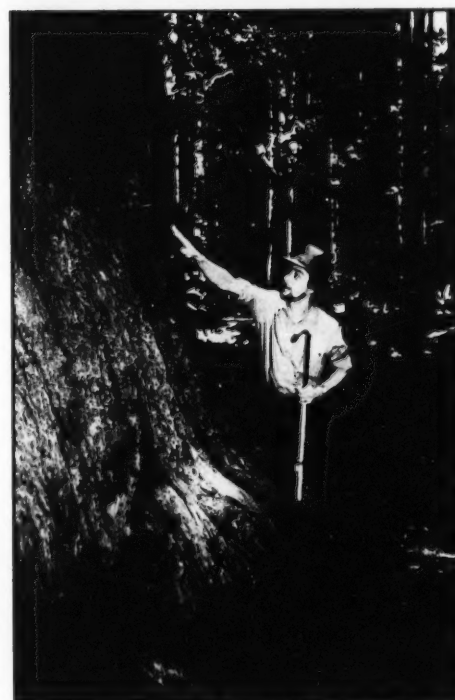


Photo courtesy of the National Park Service

A visitor explores one of our national parks.

## Screening Participants for Outdoor Programs

by Greg Lais

Are all outdoor adventure programs appropriate for all participants? Well, yes and no. It may be inappropriate for an out-of-shape beginning mountain climber to attempt Mount Everest. But there are other adventure activities that the aspiring climber can handle. A major challenge for integrated outdoor adventure program managers is to match up the person with the adventure. Screening is a process of matching people's needs with the service capacity of the provider, the demands of the environment, and the needs of other participants in order to provide high-quality, socially integrated activities. It requires considerable understanding of all the elements that go into a successfully integrated activity. However, some simple rules of thumb can be applied:

### Screening Priorities

There are three priorities in screening:

- **Safety:** Safety of participants has to be the number one priority. Proper screening is essential to insure that each participant's needs can safely be met.
- **Program quality:** A group that does not contain a good balance or match of participants can significantly diminish program quality. Ideally, in a balanced group participants with and without disabilities usually socialize, develop friendships, and enjoy each other's company. If the group is unbalanced, such as a group with an overwhelming concentration of persons with the same disability, quality interactions may be hindered. For example, an adventure involving seven people who use wheelchairs and two that are nondisabled may lead to a group atmosphere of "us and them." It would be better to have two persons who use wheelchairs, two with sensory impairments, one who ambulates with a cane, and four or five nondisabled people.
- **Social integration:** Social integration is best achieved when a mix of persons with diverse abilities are included on the same adventure. A diverse mix of participants has the advantage of increased likelihood for symbiotic relationships. For example, a person who uses a wheelchair might team up with a participant who is blind to cross a rugged trail. The person who is blind can provide an extra push to help the chair over rough spots, while the person in the chair can verbally guide his/her partner. A diverse mix also allows greater opportunity for participants to compare life experiences and issues.

### Screening Factors

Careful screening can minimize the problem of inappropriately placing people in programs that do not meet their

needs. In screening potential participants, four factors must be taken into account:

- **Environment:** The setting for adventure is one of the factors that determines the participation success of persons with varying needs. For instance, wilderness adventures typically take place in areas without roads, pavement, and other conveniences associated with accessibility. Use of activities such as canoeing, kayaking, rafting, dogsledding and pulk sledding can make these remote areas relatively accessible to persons with mobility impairments.
- **Activities:** Different kinds of skills are required in different outdoor activities. A distinction must be made between skills required to participate safely and those required to master the activity. Mastery is not needed to participate safely if the chosen environment does not demand it. For example, kayak touring on a small lake requires less skill than kayak touring on the ocean or white water kayaking.
- **Participants:** The attitudes, abilities, and interests of participants are key determinants of successfully integrated programs. Participant characteristics should be considered on both an individual and a collective group basis. Not only is it important that each person's needs are met, but also that they fit into the group without conflict or undue burden to other group participants. For example, the trip with seven wheelchair users and two nondisabled participants may place an undue physical burden on the nondisabled participants. In some groups participants with problem behaviors may create conflict or discomfort, especially during extended activities such as camping.
- **Agency factors:** An agency's ability to conduct integrated programming depends on its mission, staff, marketing capacity, and possession of required equipment. Perhaps the greatest factor is the capacity of staff members to implement integrated programs. This requires training in the technical ramifications of a disability as well as the social dynamics of pulling a diverse group together.

In beginning to provide integrated outdoor activities, agencies are advised to start slowly. Easy trips on familiar terrain, participants with a high level of self-knowledge and skill, and assistance from professional medical and disability services will all make the initial efforts more successful.

*Greg Lais is Executive Director of Wilderness Inquiry, a Minneapolis-based integrated outdoor adventure program. For further information on screening participants contact Wilderness Inquiry, 1313 Fifth St. SE, Box 84, Minneapolis, MN 55414 • (612) 379-3858 (Voice/TDD).*

# How to Integrate Successfully: Promoting Positive Interactions

by John E. Rynders and Stuart J. Schleien

In the early days of integrated recreation and outdoor education, it was commonly believed that simply putting participants with and without disabilities together in the same activity or setting would cause them to interact positively. And, sometimes, merely putting them together did have that fortunate effect. However, physical proximity did not usually, in and of itself, produce positive interactions. It became clear that in order for an integrated program to create an atmosphere that welcomed the participation of persons with disabilities, the seeds of positive attitudes in participants without disabilities had to be sown and then cultivated in a carefully structured manner.

Over the past 10 years dozens of integrated recreation and outdoor education programs have sought to promote positive interactions between participants with and without disabilities, while at the same time enhancing the outdoor skills, social skills, and self-concepts of all. The following guidelines are a synthesis of the techniques and approaches that have been found to be effective for use with community recreation, social, and outdoor education groups.

## Guideline 1: Structure Activities and Surroundings to Promote Cooperative Interactions

Without structuring an integrated situation for cooperative interactions, nondisabled individuals often view their peers with disabilities in negative ways, feel discomfort and uncertainty in interacting with them, and sometimes even display rejection toward them. Unless the setting is structured for cooperative learning experiences, competition might emerge and actually encourage participants to reject peers who are different in some way. What does it mean specifically to structure an activity for cooperative interactions?

One of three models of activity structure is usually applied when there is a group of people to instruct: Competitive, Individualistic, or Cooperative. Each is legitimate and has strengths in particular situations. Furthermore, sometimes they can be combined in an activity. We shall define each of them and look briefly at some applications.

• **Competitive:** Competition in its traditional application leads to one person in a group winning, with all other group members losing. If it is used in a group where one or more of the members have disabilities that make successful task participation difficult, it will be likely that the participants with disabilities will "come in last." An example of competitive structuring from the world of camping would be five children, some of whom have movement disabilities, lining up at the edge of a lake for a canoe race. Each has a canoe and a paddle to use. The camp director tells them that the person who reaches the other side of the lake first will win a

canoe paddle. Obviously, the children with poor coordination and low muscle tone don't have much chance of winning.

• **Individualistic:** In an individualistically structured situation, each member of a group works to improve his or her own past performance. Potentially, every member of the group, including members with disabilities, can win a prize for improvement if the targets for improved performance are not set too high or are not inappropriately matched with a disability condition. Using the canoe example again, suppose that the adult leader lines the group up on the shore of the lake and tells them that last week when they paddled across the lake each person's crossing time was recorded. Then, the adult says that each person can win a canoe paddle by improving his or her time, even if the improvement is very small. Now everyone can be a winner. This structure is often used in amateur athletics where a child is encouraged to beat his or her last time or achieve a personal record.

• **Cooperative:** Cooperatively structured activities are very helpful in many types of integrated programming, particularly if peer friendship is the goal. By its very nature, a cooperative learning structure (if handled properly) creates an interdependence because the group's attainment of an objective with everyone contributing is the quality that determines winning. Using the canoe illustration, the adult leader might have the five children climb into a voyageur canoe (a large canoe), give each person a paddle, and tell them that they are each to paddle as well as they can and that they will all win a prize if they work together to keep the canoe inside some floating markers (placed in such a way that perfection in paddling isn't required). The adult leader will need to paddle alongside to determine that everyone is paddling, and that they are encouraging and assisting one another.

In conclusion, to promote positive social interactions between participants with and without disabilities, the cooperative structure will work better than the other two. In this structure each person wants to encourage every other person to achieve a group goal that is realistically attainable, resulting in cheering, pats on the back, hugs, and so on.

## Guideline 2: Determine Purpose of Activity

Most activities will probably promote both skill development and socialization. There will also be times when one objective is given priority over the other. For instance, a 4-H club leader may designate certain periods of the year primarily for project completion, such as the months preceding the spring fashion show or county fair. Socializing will be minimal during these times and may even be regarded as a

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## "If I Can Do This . . . ": The Ski for Light Experience

by Tip Ray

Winter can be the "season of discontent" for many Americans. "Snowbirds" avoid it by migrating to Florida and Arizona. Others simply try to tolerate it as they wait anxiously for the first robin's arrival. Persons with disabilities may especially have legitimate reasons to regard winter unfavorably because of the added mobility challenges. However, for those with an adventurous spirit, the season can present wonderful and healthful leisure opportunities. Even with all of its chills and challenges, it can be an exciting time to be alive.

Leave it to the Scandinavians to come up with a balm to sooth the effects of winter. Their cure for the winter doldrums is cross-country skiing. Cross-country (X-C) skiing can be a truly equal opportunity experience because it's an activity that one can participate in and benefit from

regardless of skill level or previous experience. With just a light carpet of snow, yards, golf courses, neighborhood parks, nature trails, and city streets become places to ski.

For people with disabilities, X-C skiing can be an accessible and exhilarating experience. This fact was realized nearly 30 years ago by a Norwegian man, Erling Stordahl, described by some as a "blind visionary" who conceptualized and organized the first X-C ski program for persons with visual impairments. It paired skiers with visual impairments and sighted guides who ski in parallel tracks. In 1975, this idea emigrated to the United States and became known as *Ski For Light*.

Ski For Light, Inc., a non-profit membership association, organizes and runs X-C ski events for persons with and without disabilities throughout the northern United States. Each year, in a picturesque setting that boasts plentiful snow, Ski For Light sponsors a week-long event that brings together 200 or more persons with and without visual or mobility impairments. Run by volunteers, the week enables all participants to experience friendship, cultural awareness, and healthful lifestyles while learning and honing X-C skiing skills. A community of people connected through a common love of skiing share an atmosphere of mutual respect, joy of life, and contribution based on the concept of inclusion.

Sighted skiers serve as guides, assistants, and instructors for skiers who have disabilities. Guides accompany skiers with disabilities on the trail and, through their conversations,

paint "word pictures" that enable skiers to enjoy the winter landscape, as well as keeping them gliding safely down the trails. Guides also assist and provide trail support to persons with mobility impairments who use adapted pulks (sleds) and "sit-skis" to get around. As significant is the contribution of veteran skiers with disabilities who provide support and

training to sighted guides on the best approaches for assisting their skiing partners. Together, they learn that the success of the week-long event depends on developing a partnership based on trust, respect, and appreciation of one another's capacities.

Ski For Light week also assists participants to recognize and gain skills that can influence other aspects of their lives. For example, at the end of the day, participants have an option to attend wellness sessions that are

taught not by Ski For Light staff, but rather by the participants themselves. There is a rich human resource base within the Ski For Light community that is tapped. Participants share their personal interests, talents, and professional know-how with interested people who may become motivated to explore new opportunities once they return home. Ski For Light recognizes that the event is more than a skiing experience. In fact, many past participants, upon their return home, have become more active in the community. The Ski For Light experience is very empowering!

Ski for Light also sponsors many regional programs throughout the U.S., offering weekend events as well as year-round opportunities for individuals with and without disabilities. Tandem running, biking, and canoeing are just a few of the activities.

Winter may continue to present you with more reasons for grouching then at any other time of the year. But, if you have an inclination to "make peace" with the season, contact Ski For Light. It's a truly energizing inclusive experience.

For further information contact Ski For Light, Inc., 1455 W. Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN 55408 • (612) 827-3232. Tip Ray has been a volunteer instructor/guide at Ski For Light events since 1977. He has also served as guide trainer/coordinator for Ski For Light and has been on the board of directors.



Ski for Light partners navigate the mountains of Colorado.

## A Place for Healing: Vinland National Center

by Susan Rivard

Perched on a hill overlooking Lake Independence in Loretto, Minnesota (half an hour west of Minneapolis), Vinland National Center's physical beauty provides a healing environment, one in which people can get their lives back on track. Vinland uses its rolling hills, wooded area, and lakefront - as well as Minnesota's wealth of parks and community facilities - as the perfect settings to incorporate outdoor education into all of its programs: Employment, Chemical Health, and Community Integration.

Vinland's Employment Program is about people with disabilities getting and keeping jobs. It operates with the recognition that there are many reasons why people have difficulty finding and keeping jobs and believes that each person has unique needs that must be met before employment can be achieved. To be "ready for training or job placement" is the stated goal of the intensive Employment Program. To reach this goal, participants complete vocational assessments and evaluations, set reality-based goals, and are helped with career planning and job seeking/keeping skills. Along with vocational services, participants receive a whole-person approach to rehabilitation. This includes self-esteem, wellness, fitness, pain and stress management, and therapeutic recreation. In addition, participants learn about environmental issues such as acid rain, energy-related problems, the greenhouse effect, and wetlands conservation. Field trips to nature reserves, local lakes, and the University of Minnesota Arboretum help participants gain an appreciation for the environment and an understanding of how environmental issues impact their daily life.

Vinland's Chemical Health Program offers specialized services for adults with a dual diagnosis of chemical dependency and cognitive and functional disabilities due to brain injury and related conditions. Throughout both their stay at Vinland and their involvement with the community-based outpatient program, chemical health participants are involved in outdoor education and environmental appreciation

activities as part of therapeutic recreation. Camping trips are held at Minnesota State Parks where participants learn outdoor survival skills and environmental education from Vinland staff, park naturalists, and park interpretive centers.

Vinland's Community Integration Programs help people with disabilities learn lifelong leisure and social skills that facilitate their fuller participation in community

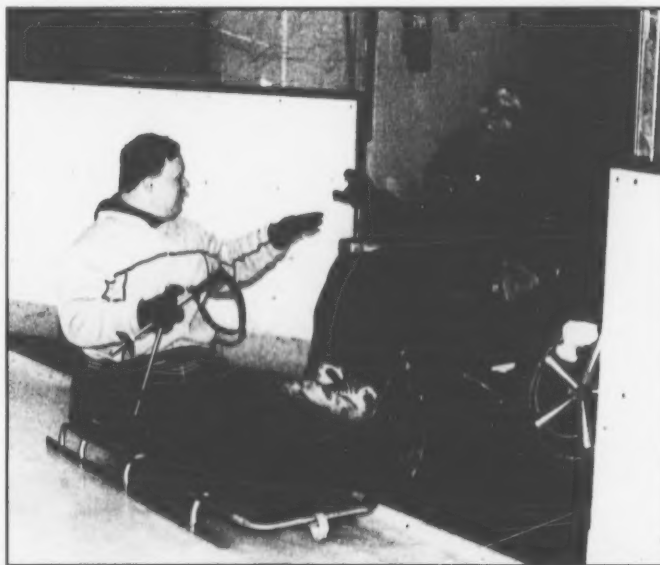
life. Programs take place both on-site at Vinland's lakefront facility and off-site in community settings. Each program is customized to meet the needs of the specific individual and group participating. Activities in these programs include canoeing, fishing, nature hikes, orienteering and outdoor survival/camping skills.

One example of a community integration program is the collaborative project between Vinland and the Red School House, a magnet school for American Indian youth. The two agencies are cooperating

to teach self-esteem, wellness, healthy lifestyle choice, chemical health, and environmental awareness. Recycling is the current environmental issue being emphasized. Children in the school collect cans and bottles, clean them at school, and take a field trip to the recycling center where they receive money for their recyclables. This money is then used to hold a "recycling party." Throughout the process students learn how recycling saves energy and natural resources and reduces solid waste in landfills.

As greater emphasis is placed on environmental education by our government and society at large, Vinland will continue to strengthen its focus on outdoor and environmental education — a focus that stresses stewardship of natural resources as well as inclusionary programming.

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Participants in Vinland's Community Integration Programs take a break from other activities at a developmental achievement center to exercise and socialize at a community ice arena.

## Making Friends with Peers and the Earth

by Linda Heyne and Micky Pearson

*"I wish my son, John, had just one good friend who would come to our house and play with him once or twice a week."*

*"It's hard for us to watch our 4-year-old nondisabled child play and relate better with peers than our 9-year-old, who is autistic."*

*"My son, Sam, needs to learn when to stop talking and when to start listening to the other children. If he could learn this, I think the children in his class would like him better."*

*"My daughter, Tracy, has too many adults in her life. She needs to make friends with other kids her own age."*

These are sentiments expressed by parents at Dowling Urban Environmental Learning Center as they share their dreams (and concerns) about friendships for their children with disabilities. The answer to their children's social needs may be found through the recently implemented Dowling Friendship Program.

The Dowling Friendship Program is a 3-year pilot project in which parents of children with and without disabilities, school personnel, and recreation providers learn how to support friendships between children with and without disabilities at school. They also learn to maintain and transfer those relationships to homes and neighborhoods.

Dowling Urban Environmental Learning Center, a public elementary school in Minneapolis, is a "magnet" school for urban environmental education. Dowling's unusual curriculum heightens awareness about issues such as recycling, appreciating the environment, taking personal responsibility for protecting the earth, and cleaning up the Mississippi River. As you walk through the doors of Dowling School, a banner greets you with a message of self-responsibility, "I am the solution!" In the words of Dowling Principal, Dr. Jeffrey Raison, "Those of us who have become a part of the Dowling experience have learned to appreciate our environment and most of all our most valued natural resource — the children."

In addition to emphasizing environmental awareness, Dowling is a front runner in providing an inclusive educational environment for children with disabilities. Children who have physical and/or intellectual limitations are actively included and educated in classrooms with their nondisabled peers. "We expect that all children can succeed," says Dr. Raison. "Our children will approach problems in a very different kind of way because of how they were educated. They will have lived with people of different ability levels."

Through the Dowling Friendship Program, children with disabilities take part in environmental education and recreation activities with nondisabled peers at Dowling, neighborhood recreation centers, and families' homes. Children participate together in programs such as Girl Scouts, 4-H,

overnight camping, and "Exploring Nature" classes.

Through their experiences, children increase their environmental awareness while learning about individual differences and commonalities, the "give and take" of social relationships, and how to be a friend. To help build friendships, families with and without a child with a disability are involved in friendship focus groups. In these groups, family members and school and recreation personnel get to know each other, discuss obstacles to friendship development, and brainstorm ways to continue the children's friendships through family and neighborhood ties.

What has been learned about friendships between children with and without disabilities through the Dowling Friendship Program? First, children with and without disabilities can enjoy reciprocal, mutually rewarding relationships. Several nondisabled children in the program have identified their partner with a disability as their "best friend." Second, nondisabled children often need specific instructions about how to be a friend to a partner with a disability during activities. Once questions are answered and instruction is provided, nondisabled peers can usually provide assistance with a natural ease and self-assurance. Third, children with disabilities often need individual coaching to develop social interaction skills. Instruction may be needed in how to greet nondisabled peers, initiate and sustain conversations, or extend an invitation to engage in a recreational activity. Fourth, if friendships are to be maintained, parents need to take an active role in promoting them. Parents are the primary source of the child's nurturance and goal setting. Some things parents have begun doing to promote friendships include getting to know parents of nondisabled children who have been friendly to their child; investigating recreational offerings at neighborhood community, recreation, and nature centers; and encouraging their children to invite classmates to participate in neighborhood programs together or visit in each others' homes.

Through collaboration among Dowling staff, families, and recreational personnel, friendships between children with and without disabilities are being fostered through learning to care for and value the environment and one another. We expect that, through these experiences, children will become the creators of a better world, one in which all life is respected, accepted, and nourished.

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## Accessing our National Parks

by W. Kay Ellis

Almost 300 million people visit our national park sites annually. An increasingly higher number of those visitors are people with disabilities. This is due in part to the increased mobility and independence of persons with disabilities in our society. However, another factor is the improved accessibility of our nation's parks and recreation areas.

Many years ago, the trend in the park and recreation field was to develop "special" programs such as "braille trails" or separate "programs for the handicapped."

Throughout the 1970s we saw a proliferation of these programs that were developed with good, yet misguided, intentions. We had the mistaken belief that people with disabilities needed and/or preferred separate, special programming, and that somehow the presence of a disability meant the park experience, especially outdoor experiences, should be different. We have come to realize that these kinds of programs are not wanted, nor needed, by people with disabilities. Separate programming creates an atmosphere of segregation and limited choices, excluding people from typical park experiences. It is also a very inefficient use of resources.

Providing access is not always an easy task due to the nature of the parks and programs involved. We have natural and historic resources that have been set aside by the government for preservation and protection so that future generations can also enjoy them. However, we also have accessibility mandates, such as the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Although the new Americans with Disabilities Act does not directly affect our federal programs, indirectly we will be affected by the increased awareness of accessibility issues created by passage of the Act.

In 1979, the National Park Service (NPS) established the Branch of Special Programs and Populations with a full-time professional staff dedicated to the issue of access to and with NPS facilities and programs. The primary goal of the Branch is to provide the highest level of access that is feasible throughout the National Park System. Among the many activities of the Branch are assessment of the current level of access in the System, identification and removal of barriers to accessibility, and provision of direct technical assistance to park sites. We are also involved in the development of policies and guidelines regarding appropriate methods and techniques for improving access. Recently, NPS played a major role in the development of national accessibility guidelines for outdoor recreation areas, such as campgrounds, picnic areas, and trails. These guidelines are in the final stages of development and will be adopted as national

standards in the near future. We are also looking at innovative ways to provide access to unique areas such as the wilderness and historic sites. In cooperation with Indiana University, NPS has developed nationwide training focusing on program and architectural accessibility for local, state, and national park and recreation areas. Through Project Access, we conduct week-long training courses targeted for park rangers, interpretive specialists, park and recreation maintenance personnel, architects, engineers, administrators, and access coordinators.

NPS has made significant progress in access over the years, and we are proud of our achievements. However, we realize we still have a long way to go to

reach the level of accessibility we desire. We are constantly trying innovative methods of access and staying abreast of new technology. Audio Description, a technique of providing verbal description of audio/visual presentations and museum exhibits to persons with visual impairments, is an example of an innovative idea which is now in use at three national parks. Other examples of program access include captioning of audio/visual programs (including using new technology in captioning), attention to exhibit label copy to insure legible reading size and contrasting colors, audio amplification devices, and tactile experiences through modeling, mapping, and exhibits. Examples of physical access efforts that will be found in the national parks include accessible parking and ramped building entrances. Barrier-free restrooms, exhibit and audio/visual areas, picnic and camping areas, and trails are under development.

The National Park Service is committed to the concept of integration of visitors with disabilities into existing and ongoing opportunities in our parks, as opposed to the provision of separate, special programming. We encourage people with disabilities to visit our parks, participate in the opportunities there, and share their experiences with us. If something is not accessible, we would appreciate hearing about it so corrective action can be taken. We would also appreciate hearing about positive experiences. Our goal is to provide the highest level of access that is feasible so that everyone — regardless of ability — can share in the experiences of our nation's natural and cultural wonders.

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**We had the mistaken belief that people with disabilities preferred separate, special programming...**

## Administrative Issues in Integrated Outdoor Programs

by Leo McAvoy

When a local outdoor education and camping facility offered a program to increase children's understanding of the role of domestic animals in our culture, a question arose about admitting 13-year-old Karen. She lives in a group home for children and young adults with developmental disabilities. Karen uses a wheelchair and requires total assistance for all daily activities. Although nonverbal, she is still able to express herself through smiles, laughter, eye contact, and crying. She loves being outdoors and with animals.

The prospect of admitting Karen into the outdoor program raised some genuine administrative questions for the staff. What kind of transportation would she need? Would an extra staff member or assistant have to be assigned to her? Would specialized equipment be needed to move her around the activity site? Could she have access to the animals? And would there be additional liability for the facility? After several discussions, the questions were resolved and Karen was enrolled in the program.

Although the extent of her participation was limited, the other members of the group were quick to provide needed help. In the sheep barn, for example, she was moved out of her wheelchair to sit on the floor with her nondisabled peers. They used hand-over-hand assistance to help her become familiar with the feel of newborn lambs. They figured out a participatory role for her in carding wool and making art creatures out of the wool felt. Karen's broad smile at the end when she sat petting a very young lamb was an unmistakable indication that she had benefited from the program.

Outdoor education and adventure programs and facilities, like most social and educational services, are embedded in administrative structures. The programs are usually offered by nonprofit or governmental agencies (e.g., schools, park departments, social services, or other service organizations) and they are regulated by administrative requirements and the exigencies of funding. Many agencies and organizations adhere to rigid planning and management processes that make changing or offering new opportunities difficult. When confronted with requests to integrate individuals with disabilities into their programs and facilities, some outdoor education and adventure agencies and organizations insist that they support integration as a concept but believe it is impossible to implement the concept. Such administrative obstacles as facility inaccessibility, lack of trained staff, and other logistical problems are frequently cited. Whether these administrative obstacles actually exist is not the key point here; indeed, they may well be obstacles to successful integration. Yet they are not insurmountable obstacles and like other obstacles, can be overcome. There are effective strategies that can be employed successfully by staff members of outdoor education and high adventure facilities and

programs that want to overcome administrative obstacles and to make integrated outdoor programs a reality.

The process of administering an integrated outdoor program begins with **evaluating the existing mission statement and program goals** and ascertaining who is served by the agency. For example, one may find that the basic philosophy of service is to exclude persons who challenge the service delivery system (e.g., individuals with disabilities). The agency's mission statement and program goals may have to be rewritten to eliminate whatever discriminatory practices exist. Once the goals and objectives are established then an agency would move to **assess staff abilities and availability**, to develop strategies to obtain needed staff, develop training in integration techniques, and create staff attitudes that are conducive to integrated programs. The agency would have to take steps to **evaluate the financial feasibility** and to include integrated programs in a regular budget, or to begin fund raising efforts to support these program efforts.

As an agency begins to serve individuals with disabilities, it must take steps to **examine the accessibility of the program and facility to persons with disabilities**. If one has grown accustomed to working primarily with nondisabled people, architectural and programmatic accessibility may appear to be insurmountable barriers to integrated programming. Transporting participants with physical disabilities up steep trails or up a staircase into a nature center are actual problems and they must be examined in the planning stages of a program. Of course, addressing perceived attitudinal obstacles (e.g., negative attitudes toward persons with disabilities) could pose a greater problem, but steps can be taken to overcome these as well.

Architectural accessibility, staff time and training, logistics, and recruiting procedures are, of course, genuine problems that must be considered. But, instead of accepting them as obstacles, they can be viewed as challenges; indeed many outdoor educators and programmers see them that way. They regard them as stimuli to the offering of a greater range of services to a broader spectrum of clients. The benefits of participation in outdoor education and adventure programs are the same for persons with and without disabilities. In themselves, administrative challenges need not prevent integrated programs from working successfully. They are simply more of the same types of challenges that innovative, service-oriented outdoor professionals solve every day.

*Leo McAvoy is a Professor in the School of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies, University of Minnesota.*

## Resources: Organizations

The following is a partial listing of organizations offering advocacy, information, or programming related to integrated outdoor education and adventure. Inclusion of an organization on the list is not necessarily an endorsement of all of its activities and philosophies.

### Advocacy/Information

- **American Foundation for the Blind**  
15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011
- **Association for Retarded Citizens of the United States**, 2501 Avenue J, Arlington, TX 76006
- **Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities**, 4156 Library Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15234
- **Association of Experiential Education**, C.U. Box 249, Boulder, CO 80309
- **Council for Exceptional Children**  
1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091
- **Epilepsy Foundation of America**  
4351 Garden City Drive, Suite 406  
Landover, MD 20785
- **Information Center for Individuals with Disabilities**, 20 Providence Street, Room 329, Boston, MA 02116
- **Institute on Community Integration**, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455
- **Muscular Dystrophy Association, Inc.**, 810 7th Avenue, New York, NY 11357
- **National Association for Mental Health**, 10 Columbus Circle, New York, NY 10019
- **National Association of Developmental Disabilities Council**, 1234 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Suite 103, Washington, DC 20005
- **National Association of Interpretation**, P.O. Box 1892, Fort Collins, CO 80522

- **National Association of the Deaf**  
814 Thayer Avenue, Silver Springs, MD 20910
- **National Down Syndrome Congress**  
1800 Dempster Street, Park Ridge, IL 60068-1146
- **National Easter Seal Society**  
2023 W. Ogden Avenue, Chicago, IL 60612
- **National Federation of the Blind**  
1800 Johnson Street, Baltimore, MD 21230
- **National Handicapped Sports**  
4405 East-West Highway #603  
Bethesda, MD 20814
- **National Head Injury Foundation**  
280 Singletary Lane, Framingham, MA 01701
- **National Information Center on Deafness**, Gallaudet College, Kendall Green, Washington, DC 20002
- **National Multiple Sclerosis Society**  
205 E. 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017
- **National Paraplegia Foundation**  
333 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60601
- **National Society of Children and Adults with Autism**, 1234 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Suite 1017, Washington, D.C. 20005
- **National Spinal Cord Injury Foundation**, 369 Elliot Street  
Newton Upper Falls, MA 02164
- **National Therapeutic Recreation Society/National Recreation and Park Association**, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302
- **The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps**, 7010 Roosevelt Way, N.E., Seattle, WA 98115

- **United Cerebral Palsy Association**  
66 East 34th Street, New York, NY 10016

### Programming

- **Access Alaska**, 3550 Airport Way, #3, Fairbanks, AK 99701
- **Activities Unlimited, Inc.**, P.O. Box 324, Helena, MT 59624
- **Alternative Mobility Adventure Seekers**, Boise State University Physical Education Department, 1910 University Drive, Boise, ID 83725
- **Bradford Woods Outdoor Education Center**, 5040 State Road 67 North, Martinsville, IN 46151
- **Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center**, P.O. Box 697, Breckenridge, CO 80424
- **Challenge Alaska**, P.O. Box 110065 Anchorage, AK 99511
- **CW Hog**, Box 8118, Pocatello, ID 83209
- **Environmental Travel Companions**, Fort Mason Center, Building C, San Francisco, CA 94123
- **Outward Bound**, 690 Market St. #500, San Francisco, CA 94101
- **Paraplegics on Independent Nature Trips (POINT)**, 3200 Mustang Drive, Grapevine, TX 76051
- **Shared Outdoor Adventure Recreation (SOAR)**, P.O. Box 14583 Portland, OR 14583
- **Wilderness Inquiry**, 1313 5th Street S.E., Box 84, Minneapolis, MN 55414

## Suggested Readings on Integrated Outdoor Education and High Adventure Programs

- Hornfeldt, D., McAvoy, L., & Schleien, S. (1989). Influences of integration on learning of natural history concepts by children with and without disabilities. In M.H. Legg (Ed.), Proceedings of the Research Symposium: 1989 National Association of Interpretation Workshop (408-415). Fort Collins, CO: National Association of Interpretation.
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distraction by nondisabled members who are intent on making the "best bookshelf at the county fair." At times such as these, the leader must be clear about the intent of the activity and avoid creating a situation in which participants are trying to fulfill conflicting objectives.

### Guideline 3: Strengthen Friendship Skills of Nondisabled Participants

Why should a group leader spend time with instruction in friendship? Don't people without disabilities naturally interact in a friendly way with those who have disabilities? Yes, and no. Yes, they usually know how to interact in a friendly manner (although they may need to have their usual friendship skills sharpened or expanded). And no, peers without disabilities do not often have the knowledge and skills to interact easily and ably with a person who may be different. Participants without disabilities will need instruction in how to cope with communication, movement, and other types of challenges.

### Guideline 4: Promote Integration as Everyone's Responsibility

While recreation and education agencies must assume a leadership position in assuring equal access to their services, individuals such as group home staff and parents must assist with the integration process if it is to succeed. They can help organization staff with tasks such as environmental analyses and adaptation selection, and they can also serve on advisory boards, assist in staff training, and recruit volunteers.

*This article is adapted from Together Successfully: Creating Recreational and Educational Programs that Integrate People with and without Disabilities, by John E. Rynders and Stuart J. Schleien. The guidelines presented here are four of eight in the manual, which contains over 100 pages of strategies for integrating programs. It may be purchased for \$12.50 from the Association for Retarded Citizens of the United States, Publications Department, P.O. Box 1047, Arlington, TX 76004.*

*Integration, continued from page 1*

natural pursuits become even more compelling.

Outdoor education is generally defined as a discipline in which the participants develop an understanding and appreciation of the natural environment and a recognition that such an understanding contributes greatly to one's quality of life. It is education in, about, and for the outdoors. It may be a process, a place, a purpose, or a topic. For example, as a process, outdoor education can focus on regular school subjects in the outdoors by using resources typically found in nature. Students can be required to measure the length and depth of a stream in order to develop math, motor, and social skills, as well as to acquire scientific knowledge. Outdoor education methods and activities include a wide array of approaches that fit the four seasons of the year.

High adventure programs are organized excursions into a wilderness or semi-wilderness environment. Here, participants are led through a series of activities — sometimes risky — that lead to personal growth and fulfillment. The risk may be environmental, as in white water rafting for example, or emotional, such as engaging in new activities and stretching one's perceived limits of capabilities.

Outdoor education and high adventure activities are sponsored by a variety of agencies. Socially integrated programs and activities are enjoyed in schools, parks, natural resource agencies, camps, wilderness areas, adaptive recreation departments, social service agencies, one's own backyard, and many other naturally occurring environments.

Generally speaking, the holistic purpose of outdoor education and adventure is to foster the lifelong understanding and appreciation of the outdoors and wilderness. In this way, such programs also serve as a means of providing stewards of the earth's natural resources. As an extension of the individual's habilitation or

individualized education program, integrated outdoor programs can be designed to promote positive changes in behavior, emotional adjustment, self-esteem, physical development, socialization, and friendship among people of varying abilities.

Outdoor education is a potent force in accomplishing the aforementioned goals because it offers such a naturally stimulating learning environment. Because of a low human population density, low levels of noise and movement, and a slow rate of change, there is an element of high predictability out-of-doors. Additionally, teachers, therapists, therapeutic recreation specialists, volunteers, and family members have opportunities to interact with participants in non-school and non-work environments. By focusing attention on participants' strengths, outdoor education and adventure activities may uncover needs that have gone unrecognized in more traditional settings. And, perhaps, most notably, participants with and without disabilities learn to trust and depend on each other for comfort and safety in an outdoor setting that is equally novel to both. This very absence of a controlled or contaminated environment permits all participants to discover innovative ways of interacting with and learning from each other as they live, work, eat, explore, discover, and play together. In many respects, an outdoor education or wilderness group is the ultimate team.

Although some programs emphasize individual challenges and activities, in mixed ability groups, the goal of social integration is better served if programs give higher priority to group functions. Cooperative groups help to equalize everyone's participation, thereby avoiding the "excess baggage syndrome" and the tendency for some people to sit passively on the sidelines during activities. A sense of community and teamwork is built by stressing the importance of group functions and accomplishments. What one individual can do is not so important as what the group can accomplish collectively. Collectively, no challenge can inhibit a

group that is committed to a common goal.

Based on these many benefits, it should be quite clear why a substantial amount of energy and effort is being applied to education in the outdoors. Recent state and federal legislation, such as various human rights acts and the Americans with Disabilities Act, mandate public access in outdoor environments. These laws have helped to spearhead and guide programming efforts in our municipal, state, regional, and national parks, for example. However, we must go beyond these laws to exploit the full potential of benefits that can be derived from these programs and settings. People of all ages and varying abilities are not only becoming active in our camps, YMCAs, scout troops, 4-H groups, parks, wilderness areas, and outdoor education and nature centers, they are also learning to enjoy, appreciate, and preserve the outdoors in more thoughtful and appropriate cooperative ways that were unimaginable just a few years ago.

Outdoor education and adventure are unique ways to provide any individual, young or old, with opportunities to learn in a natural "classroom". People of varying abilities can work together to overcome obstacles. Integrated outdoor programs provide opportunities for people to work, play, and meet natural challenges together. In addition to facilitating cooperation and acceptance, lifelong skills and friendships are developed. To discover that we can all rise above our own perceived limitations will help us survive, and then thrive, throughout our lifetimes.

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### IMPACT

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The mission of the Center and Institute is to apply their resources to improve the quality and community orientation of professional services and social supports available to individuals with disabilities and their families. Efforts are directed at facilitating the independence of citizens with disabilities and their social integration into the mainstream of community life. Inquiries about the Center, Institute, or IMPACT can be directed to:

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